

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 07359 100856Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1377
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
CINCPAC HONOLULU

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CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PEPR, ETRD, PBOR, LA, TH
SUBJECT: LAO-THAI RELATIONS

REF: (A) BANGKOK 7109 (B) VIENTIANE 311 (C) VIENTIANE 314

1. DURING A MEETING MARCH 9, ACCORDING TO BANGKOK PRESS,
FONMIN UPPADIT AND LAO SECSTATE NOUPHAN SIDPHASAY AGREED TO
EXCHANGE TRADE MISSION SOON AND TO WORK TO MAKE THE MEKONG
RIVER BORDER AN AREA OF "FRIENDSHIP AND PEACE". NOUPHAN
APPARENTLY DELIVERED TO THE RTG AN AIDE-MAMOIRE REGARDING THE
MEKONG RIVER INCIDENT, IN WHICH THAI PATROLS FIRED ACROSS
THE BORDER (REF B). REFERRING TO THE INCIDENT, UPPADIT TOLD
THE PRESS THAT BOTH SIDES AGREED TO AVOID CONFLICT ALONG
THE BORDER. NOUPHAN CALLED FOR FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
1976 THAI-LAO FRIENDSHIP AGREEMENT, WHICH NORMALIZED RELA-
TIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES FOLLOWING THE PATHET LAO
TAKEOVER IN VIENTIANE. WITHOUT SPECIFYING, NOUPHAN SAID

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PAGE 02 BANGKO 07359 100856Z

"THERE HAVE BEEN SOME CONTRADICTIONS" IN IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE AGREEMENT.

2. REACTING TO CHARGES BY LAO PM KAYSONE AND SECSTATE
NOUPHAN THAT THE U.S. WAS REACTIVATING BASES IN THAILAND
(REF A), FORMER PM KHUKRIT PRAMOT IN HIS NEWSPAPER COLUMN
"RINGSIDE" MARCH 9 CHARGED THAT SECSTATE NOUPHAN "DISPLAYED

HOSTILITY TOWARDS THAILAND WITHOUT CONCERN FOR THAI GOOD INTENTIONS". KHUKRIT SAID THAT NOUPHAN HAS BEEN UNREASONABLE IN INSISTING, WRONGLY, THAT THERE ARE STILL US BASES IN THAILAND. AMERICAN BASES, KHUKRIT SAID, ARE NOT "SMALL THINGS, WHICH COULD BE HIDDEN FROM THE PUBLIC'S EYES". IF THERE WERE BASES IN THAILAND, THE THAI, NOT THE LAO PEOPLE, "WOULD HOLLER AGAINST THEM". THE LAOTIAN GOVERNMENT IS "TOO CREDULOUS", KHUKRIT WROTE, AND GUILTY OF UNFAIR ALLEGATIONS, DESPITE SEVERAL GESTURES OF GOOD WILL FROM THE THAI GOVERNMENT. KHUKRIT CONCLUDED, "AS IT IS, I CANNOT SEE HOW THAILAND AND LAOS COULD REACH MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING, SINCE LAOS IS STILL HARBORING SUSPICION ALL THE TIME AND WILL NOT SHOW ANY UNDERSTANDING TOWARDS THAILAND".

3. COMMENT: DESPITE THE CHARGES FROM THE LAOTIANS, THE UPPADIT-NOUPHAN MEETING SEEMS TO HAVE RESULTED IN A MORE SENSIBLE EXCHANGE WHICH HOPEFULLY WILL CLEAR THE WAY FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT IN LAO-THAI RELATIONS.

4. FORMER PM KHUKRIT IS SOMETIMES SNIDE, BUT RARELY SO DIRECT AS IN HIS CIRTICISM OF VISITOR NOUPHAN AND THE LAO GOVERNMENT. HIS REMARKS REFLECT GENERAL EXASPERATION AMONG THAIS IN DEALING WITH THE LPDR, WHICH IS SEEN HERE FREQUENTLY AS UNREASONABLE, UNRESPONSIVE AND ITS OWN WORST ENEMY.

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